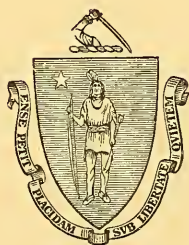


FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST
COMMISSION.

1917.



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FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE FOREST COMMISSION.

The State Forest Commission was appointed in the year 1914 under an act of the General Court of that year providing that "ten thousand dollars may be expended in 1914 and twenty thousand dollars annually for the four succeeding years in the acquisition of lands." The purpose of the act is the reclamation of as much as possible of the wild and waste land in the Commonwealth, — estimated to be a million acres in extent, which has been stripped of its productive growth and has grown up to birch, cherry, poplar and scrub oak, and often has been burned over once or more, — and gradually to supplant this worthless growth by suitable forests. Such forests, when once established and properly maintained, will furnish merchantable timber, spruce for pulp wood in the manufacture of paper, railway ties, telegraph poles and posts, as well as the material for numerous manufacturing and chemical industries, — a great source of wealth to be conserved and developed, so that from it, by proper cutting and replanting, the community may obtain an annual return as from any other serial crop.

The Commission began with a careful study of the woodlands of the State, and sent letters of inquiry to the mayors of cities, chairmen of boards of selectmen, and forest wardens. A great many offerings were made, and the Commission examined most of them; but generally the areas were too small for economical development. The first forest established by the Commission, named the Otter River State Forest from the river which flows through it, is in the towns of Winchendon, Royalston and Templeton, and contains 1,700 acres in a natural white pine country. The second forest, named the Myles Standish State Forest, is in the towns of Plymouth and Carver, and contains 7,000 acres of typical Cape land, suitable for white, red and Scotch pines. Eighty thousand white pines were planted here

previous to its purchase by the Commonwealth. Within the limits of this forest there are 13 ponds and lakes, with an aggregate area of 300 acres, the borders of which offer excellent camping sites. Such sites can be let each year without injury to the forest in a manner similar to that adopted by the United States Forest Service, and from these sites an appreciable revenue may be derived. These ponds are important, also, as a valuable fire protection. A small cranberry bog yielded its first crop of berries in 1916, 102 boxes of which were sold for \$63. We had arranged for the sale of these berries also this year, but unfortunately an early frost killed them before they could be gathered. The grass cut in the forest was sold for \$10. About 3 acres of open land were planted to potatoes by some of the people of Carver this year at no charge. We have requested the Fish and Game Commission to patrol this forest against hunting during the autumn months, and this, and all the forests, can be used as game reserves. The third forest, named the Harold Parker State Forest, is in the towns of Andover, North Andover and Reading, and contains 1,100 acres. The fourth forest, named the Savoy State Forest, is in the town of Savoy, and also contains 1,100 acres. The Commission is making type surveys of these forests.

Since the deeds of the Myles Standish State Forest in many instances are ambiguous, and the boundaries indefinite, the Commission has proceeded to make a taking by outside boundaries marked by monuments and pipes, in order to establish a substantial title and make all doubtful corners certain. It probably will take similar action with one or more of the other forests.

The four forests are rather widely located with reference to one another, in order that several sections of the Commonwealth may have the advantage and benefit of these object-lessons in forestry. They differ materially in topography, soil and growth, and therefore they offer the possibility of producing forest trees of several different species. The Myles Standish State Forest, for instance, is in general of a flat nature, the highest elevations on it not being over 200 feet, and the soil being of light texture, suitable mainly for the production of pines of such species as Scotch, red and white. The Savoy

State Forest, in comparison, is 2,000 feet or more above sea level, and is better suited for the production of heavy stands of spruce and fir rather than pine. Ash and birch also are adapted to this region, the former in particular being a tree of material commercial value.

Since the purpose of the act, under which these lands have been acquired, is their reclamation, and it is less expensive to plant them at once after clearing rather than to allow a scrub growth to get possession of the ground, as it is sure to do in a few years' time, it has been necessary, on account of the inability of the State Forester, from lack of money, to do the work to devote a considerable portion of the appropriation for the Commission to this purpose and for fire protection, although the expenditure of this money has depleted to just that extent the available funds for the purchase of land. But it is quite as necessary to plant and care for these lands as it is to purchase them, and there is no object in going on with the purchase unless the lands are to be converted from waste lands into productive forests; in fact, it is more of a detriment than a benefit to the public for the Commonwealth to start upon a policy of economic reclamation which will not be carried to completion.

There have been expended in the Otter River State Forest from the Commission appropriation \$2,200 for fire lines to a width of from 4 to 6 feet, brush cutting, ploughing, thinning, surveys and planting, 400 acres in all; and in the Myles Standish State Forest, \$6,000 for similar work, including the purchase of tools and pumps and the brushing out of boundary lines to a width of 12 to 15 feet, and the clearing of roads so that fire equipment can be transported in teams. The planting 400 acres in all was done in alternate rows of Scotch, Austrian and white pines, and as many red pines as the State Forester's nurseries could furnish, — 160,000 in all, — besides 40,000 Norway poplars; and in addition 100,000 seedling pines have been set in the nursery. On the Harold Parker State Forest 6,500 red and white pines have been planted, and we have expended this year in this planting — 10 acres in all — and for line clearing, \$262.35. On the Savoy State Forest 16,000 white pines and 6,000 Norway spruces have been planted, 22 acres

in all, at a cost of \$98.24. Except the poplars all the trees have been furnished by the State Forester.

To complete the boundary lines of the Otter River State Forest, and add certain waste lands possible of acquisition, 300 acres should be added, making the forest 2,000 acres. The Commission has agreed to purchase six small parcels of land, comprising 250 acres, to add to the Harold Parker State Forest, and desires to make the forest 2,000 acres. The Commission will add 500 acres to the Savoy State Forest. In order to extend boundary lines to desired points 300 more acres should be secured, making this forest 1,500 acres. Other lands which have been considered for purchase are situated in the southern portions of Worcester and Berkshire counties and on the Cape, and there are other portions of the State where there are large waste areas.

Unless the General Court shall see fit to make some change in the act of 1914, the Commission this year may proceed first to acquire as much land as possible and allow it to remain unprotected and unimproved, in which case the land will remain in the same condition as under its former owners, title only having changed hands; or second, it may stop buying land other than so much as it has agreed to purchase, and spend its appropriation on reclamation and improvement; or third, it may expend a portion of its appropriation in acquiring more land, and a portion in reclamation and improvement. The third is the best line of procedure, with the expectation, however, that future appropriations will be made for continuance of the work, since it would be unwise to plant and protect unless such work is to be continued. Fire lines and roads, for instance, are of little use unless kept up, and the forests need this yearly protection as an insurance against fire.

The policy of acquiring waste lands, and the reclamation of them, is a sane one. This year the fact is brought home that the Commonwealth should produce more timber, and that waste land should be utilized for the benefit of the Commonwealth rather than continue being an encumbrance. While timber production is the main object of the establishment of State forests, they have value also as recreation reserves; also these forests offer the possibility of work for many men over

a period of years, such as clearing, slash disposal, planting, thinning, fire lines and road building, and there is no season of the year, except when snow is very deep, that some kind of forest work cannot be done. Prison labor can be used in much of this work, or in dull years, such as 1913, unemployed men can be used. The State forests also serve as object-lessons to private landowners, and thereby act as a stimulus towards reclamation work on their part.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE OF FORESTS.

Balance from 1916,	\$7,135 57	
Appropriation for 1917,	20,000 00	
	<hr/>	\$27,135 57
Expenditures: —		
Services,	\$5,765 77	
Travel,	1,129 40	
Land,	5,978 29	
Supplies and equipment,	1,457 58	
Express, freight, etc.,	120 57	
Trees,	170 00	
Maps, photographs, etc.,	91 69	
Postage,	3 79	
Sundries,	188 28	
	<hr/>	14,905 37
Balance Nov. 30, 1917,		\$12,230 20

EXPENSES OF COMMISSION.

Appropriation for 1917,	\$500 00	
Expenditures: —		
Travel,	\$118 98	
Stationery and postage,	32 79	
Printing,	41 21	
Sundries,	1 50	
	<hr/>	194 48
Balance returned to treasury Nov. 30, 1917,		\$305 52

HARVEY N. SHEPARD.
F. W. RANE.
ELISHA M. WHITNEY.